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Commonweal

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by C. K. Yearley, Jr.

Prisoners of the Nile

by Edward Wakin

The Meaning of Racism

by George H. Dunne

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THE COMMONWEAL
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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

POLITICS AND THE BUDGET

NO SOONER was President Eisenhower's 1960 budget delivered to Congress than it was promptly and bitterly denounced by Democratic spokesmen as "political propaganda." And no sooner were these charges relayed to Mr. Eisenhower than he denounced the denouncers, charging in his turn that it was the criticism of his budget which was "political."

It is ironic that the word "politics" should be used as a term of calumny even by those who hold our highest political offices. But it is even more unfortunate that the "political" label should be taken to signify something like "irrelevant" or "meaningless."

Obviously, the Democratic critics of the President's budget are correct in calling it political, that is, concerned with the effect it will produce in the minds of the voters, and intended to bring advantage to the Republican Party and corresponding disadvantage to the Democratic Party. The same concern for voter reaction and the same attempt to enhance the position of their own Party are, of course, involved in the Democratic response to the budget. But it is neither scandalous nor surprising that this should be the case.

"Political" as it is, the proposed budget nevertheless embodies the thinking of the Administration on the proper role of government, on the condition of the union, actually and ideally, in both national and international terms. The values which shape this thinking are clearly discernible in it.

The conception of government underlying the President's budget calls for minimal government action in almost every field. It sees financial stability as the nation's first need and adjusts its programs accordingly. The chief way for the government to assure its goal of price stability, in this view, is to cut back its spending, to retrench on existing governmental programs and to refrain from undertaking new ones.

What is "political" about this budget, in the pejorative sense of the term, is that its much-extolled balance is, upon examination, extremely precarious. It can be maintained only if a number of debatable economic assumptions turn out to be correct, if Congress passes new tax legislation, which it is not likely to do, and if Congress does not pressure the Administration into certain additional expenditures, which it is quite likely to do.

It is hard to understand how these likelihoods could have been ignored, except that the inevitable toppling of the budget's delicate balance, and the impossibility of hinted-at tax cuts, can then be represented as the responsibility of the "spending" Democratic Congress.

CRITICS OF the President's budget are by and large spokesmen for a view that calls for greater governmental activity, stimulating the national economy, meeting national needs for schools, roads, housing, etc., as these needs arise, and financing them however possible. Such a view, which does not rule out a recourse to deficit spending, does not, obviously, regard inflation as the greatest danger to our national well-being.

Some of the Democrats who are leading the attack on the Administration's budget are indulging in "political" caricature, of course. "Politicking" may be seen in the reduction of the President's position to simple slogans and in the Congressional call for all manner of clearly impossible but appealing legislation. But this does not invalidate the basic beliefs and arguments which led to the political maneuvering in the first place.

A case can be made for both sides of this debate, but a choice must be made. Thus far, we feel, the

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arguments of those who have criticized the budget have not been met. They are certainly not met by the President's dismissal of them as "political."

In his recent press conference Mr. Eisenhower said scornfully that his critics were suffering from "budgetary schizophrenia," because they maintained that his budget was not likely to be balanced in its actual application and at the same time maintained that it did not call for adequate government spending in many areas.

We tend to agree with critics of the budget on both of these points, seeing in it two distinct and simultaneous deficiencies. If there is anything schizophrenic here, it is the budget itself, which leaves undone many things which should be done, and at the same time fails to provide enough money even for its own too limited goals.

THE POPE CALLS A COUNCIL

ECUMENICAL COUNCILS are convened by the Holy See and attended by as many as possible of the world's cardinals, bishops, abbots and superiors general of religious orders. In the entire history of the Church there have been only twenty such Councils. The first, held at Nicaea in the time of Constantine, 325 A.D., dealt with the Arian heresy and produced the original draft of what modern-day Catholics know as the Nicene Creed. The twentieth, the Vatican Council of 1869-70, issued a broad constitution on the Catholic faith, and is chiefly referred to today for its definition of papal infallibility in matters of faith and morals.

Between the first and the last, a list of the names of the Ecumenical Councils and the subjects they covered serves as a reminder in outline form of the Church's almost two thousand years of history. To that list Pope John XXIII has now decided to add another, one which will be devoted to the subject of reunion for a divided Christianity.

Complete details of Pope John's plans for the twenty-first Ecumenical Council are not yet available. However, it seems clear that his first objective is to resume the long-interrupted dialogue with Eastern Orthodoxy, with a view to eventual reunion after nine hundred years of separation. Such a consequence would, of course, have incalculable importance for the Church and the world, and, although the achievement of this goal would not be easy, early statements by Orthodox leaders are somewhat encouraging.

As far as Protestantism is concerned, the immediate possibilities are considerably less than in the case of the Eastern Orthodox churches. But a truly historic venture of this nature must proceed slowly, and we may devoutly hope that Pope John's vision in calling this Council will lead, however haltingly, to those first steps toward the unity of all Christendom which we all desire.

Pope John showed his concern for Christian unity in the first public address he made after his election, but few people expected him to move so quickly to implement it. The fact that he has done so now gives added strength to the belief that his reign will be far more than the transitional one predicted by some when he was elected. With God's help Pope John XXIII will clearly make his own mark in history.

NATIONAL DEFENSE

IT IS HARD not to wince when Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson reproves the Republican National Committee for injecting politics into vital national issues. "Defense is one field in which partisanship has no place," the Senator declared.

Senator Johnson is right, of course, even though defense has in recent days been held no more sacred than anything else by countless ambitious Republicans and Democrats, including Mr. Johnson himself. The facts of our national defense, and in particular the achievements and deficiencies of our missile program, have been badly confused by the barrage of claims, charges and denials hurled back and forth between Administration spokesmen and Administration critics.

Thus it is good news, if headline-hunting can be restrained in the interests of the public welfare, that a bipartisan investigation will soon be made into the actual state of the nation's defenses by the Senate Preparedness subcommittee and the newly formed Committee on Aeronautics and Space Science.

MOSCOW METAPHYSICS

ACCORDING to an amazing broadcast by Radio Moscow, religious dogma on the existence of God has been refuted by modern satellites and rockets. A recent A.P. dispatch from London gives an account of a radio talk by Y. T. Fadeyev, head of the "scientific-atheism [sic] section of the journal *Science and Life*." Mr. Fadeyev declared that belief in God has been shaken by the fact that "satellites and rockets have not detected the All-Highest, angels and so on." Similarly, said Mr. Fa-

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deyev, the religious teaching that men can attain heaven only through divine intervention is reduced to the "comical" by the achievements of modern aviation and rocketry.

What is amazing here is not the atheism, which one expects from a Communist, but the extraordinary crudity, even simple-mindedness, of the atheistic argument. Soviet attainments in various of the arts and, most impressively, in the sciences, lead one to expect a corresponding knowledgeability and sophistication in philosophy as well. Such childish, village-atheist declarations incline one to resurrect the so recently discarded image of the Russian barbarian.

It may be, of course, that these crudities amount to no more than cynically offered propaganda for the Russian masses, but this interpretation is equally startling in what it implies of the level of intelligence of these masses. Whatever it means, the Moscow broadcast is deeply saddening.

HOW MUCH FOR HOUSING?

IF OUR EXPERIENCE is any guide, it is not easy to arouse much interest in the subject of America's spreading slums. A few weeks ago, though, a priest in New York managed to attract considerable attention to the housing situation in his parish: despairing of getting anything done any other way, he invited the city's newspapers to send reporters and photographers to join him on a tour of the worst building in the neighborhood. The newspaper stories about and photographs of conditions in that building led to quick inspection and immediate condemnation by city officials, one of whom told reporters there was "nothing keeping the building from complete collapse."

In the total housing picture this incident is a small thing, of course, involving as it did only one building in one parish in one city. The prompt action taken by city officials under the glare of publicity meant the relocation into safer quarters of only a handful of families. But it is against this background that we judge two housing bills currently up for consideration in Congress—one an Administration measure and one offered by Senator Clark of Pennsylvania.

The emphasis in the Administration bill is on reducing the role of the Federal government in slum clearance and housing and in cutting back on financial outlay for these purposes. The underlying presumption is that the housing situation in our big cities is so much improved that the Federal government can begin to withdraw in favor of private and city and state initiative. However, we see no indication whatsoever that this is the case. Indeed, to us the need for a much more vigorous program of slum clearance and low-cost housing is overwhelming. Between the two housing bills, then, which will soon be debated in Congress, we would very strongly favor that offered by Senator Clark. This measure would provide for a ten-year, six billion dollar program of slum clearance and urban renewal; it would include plans for badly needed low-rental public housing units, as well as providing incentives for greater efforts by private builders.

Under other circumstances, we could understand arguments on behalf of cutting down our national effort in the field of housing. If it were argued, for example, that the nation was in such imminent peril that every available penny had to go into defense spending, it might well be that housing would have to wait. If we planned to tax and tax and tax to speed the United States missile program, slum clearance might have to suffer. But no such arguments are being advanced, nor could they be; no one can seriously claim that we are spending all we possibly can on defense and that there is nothing left for housing and slum clearance.

The health and well-being of the family are essentials in the life of any society. In America's slums in the prosperous 1950's hundreds of thousands of families live under conditions that can only be described as scandalous. We do not simply urge support for an expanded housing law; we suggest that those in and out of Congress who now oppose such a measure take a house-by-house tour in the slums of any major American city. If that is done, we have no doubt that a good housing bill will pass.

EMPATHY DEPT.

U. N. AMBASSADOR Henry Cabot Lodge, quoted in a recent A.P. dispatch, told about the lady who congratulated him on one of his speeches at the United Nations. "When I came here today I was completely confused," said the lady. "Now I'm still confused, but it's on a much higher level."

We are deeply touched by this anecdote. As dubious-compliment receivers from way back, we think we know just how Mr. Lodge felt. And as struggling human beings from way back, doing our editorial best in this out-of-joint world, we think we know just how the lady felt, too.

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Thirty-Fifth Anniversary Year

The Future of The Commonweal

IT IS INESCAPABLE that the American journal of opinion occupies a less prominent place on the contemporary landscape than it occupied even as recently as the 1930's. To begin with, there are not nearly as many such periodicals. And those which are still publishing have had to give ground before the onslaughts of the digests, news magazines and picture weeklies. More than ever before it would seem that the character of the journal of opinion, rather than the numerical extent of its readership, determines whatever importance it has on the American scene.

Much of the influence of this type of magazine is therefore indirect. Among its most interested readers, those who regularly tend to weigh its views on vital issues, are public figures with large followings of their own—newspaper editors, syndicated columnists, radio commentators, professors, teachers and men prominent in political life. This is one way in which quality of readership tends to compensate for the lack of a mass circulation. Another is the great extent to which such journals are used in public and college libraries and other important centers of information, here and abroad.

All this is eminently true of The Commonweal, which this year is observing its 35th anniversary. In the space of a generation the stands it has taken and the quality of the contributions to its pages have won it a place of eminence among American publications generally. The Commonweal is much quoted in the American press and in a number of countries overseas. It finds itself in 1959 at an apex of its circulation and influence. But, like other American journals of opinion, the magazine is confronted by persistent economic difficulties.

With a quality rather than a quantity circulation, The Commonweal is more vulnerable to sharply rising costs of production than those mass-audience periodicals which are supported primarily by sizable advertising revenues. Because the over-all costs of such basic items as printing, distribution and postage are mounting steadily, and since there is inflation all along the line, there is a wide gap between income and expenses.

To meet this situation, which became extremely difficult two years ago, a small group of friends of The Commonweal decided to work together to see what they could accomplish on a temporary, emergency basis. Thanks to their determined personal efforts, The Commonweal has been able to surmount its deficits for 1957 and 1958. This small committee was spurred on in its emergency efforts by the prospect of the magazine's 35th anniversary year, when it was hoped that such activity could be broadened to include interested readers from all parts of the country and be put on a more permanent basis. The way this is to be done is to form what will be known as the Commonweal Associates. Readers who are interested in The Commonweal and who want to help it keep publishing will be invited to take out memberships in this new organization which we believe can mean so much for the magazine's future.

IN INAUGURATING the Commonweal Associates at the outset of this year's Catholic Press Month, we are harking back to a familiar pattern. It was the Calvert Associates who founded this lay-edited journal of opinion thirty-five years ago and helped keep The Commonweal publishing during its early years. Moreover, several similar groups, organized to assist other American journals of opinion in the same way, have consistently met with substantial success. The hope is that the establishment of the Commonweal Associates will enable a number of readers who believe in The Commonweal and its role in American life to take an active interest and share in the furthering of its work.

Invitations to join the Commonweal Associates should be in the mails later this month. And periodically throughout this anniversary year reports of progress in building up the membership will appear in these pages. We have confidence that our readers will follow this campaign for members with marked interest and will do all in their power to make certain its success.

During 1959 The Commonweal's editors are planning a number of special features in the magazine. These will appear from time to time throughout the year as a particularly appropriate way to honor The Commonweal's thirty-fifth anniversary. If during the same interval the Commonweal Associates can become firmly established, and thereby assure the future life of the magazine, the anniversary observance will be an enduring achievement.

EDWARD S. SKILLIN.

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Help for the President

He cannot do his job alone. Nevertheless, a Presidential staff poses its own problem and suffers from its own inherent limitations

by C. K. YEARLEY, JR.

JUST OVER twenty years ago, Franklin Roosevelt's Committee on Administrative Management (the Brownlow Committee) uttered its quiet but eloquent cry that the President of the United States needed help. At that juncture in the mid-thirties, despite the expansiveness of New Deal government, the President, amazingly enough, still did not direct an executive organization that was really his own. The sole exception, of course, was the Cabinet, but its extra-constitutional position, the reasons for which its members were selected, and the fact that it tended to be a stronghold of special pleaders rendered it, in many respects, an administrative instrument of dubious value.

To be sure, by literal standards Mr. Roosevelt was not entirely without aid. Harry Hopkins brilliantly manned his makeshift desk in a White House bedroom, and a corporal's guard of administrative assistants and secretaries, some of whose names were destined to pass into the public domain, performed invaluable services. Yet they were merely members of the President's household. Notwithstanding their high capacities and unusual dedication, they exercised neither legal nor constitutional control over any officers of government. Officially they lacked authority to interpose themselves between the White House and various branches, agencies, or personnel of the State, and they enjoyed no place whatever in the prevailing administrative chain of command. In an administrative sense, therefore, the Presidency remained essentially an eighteenth-century office whose incumbents were constrained to cope with twentieth-century problems.

This situation was recognized, of course, long before the plea for help came from the President's Committee. Warnings of the growing administrative lag affecting the Executive had come with increasing frequency from students of government and occasionally from Presidents themselves, Woodrow Wilson notable among them. Having listened to the inner creaking and groaning of the presidential institution intensified by the multiple burdens of war, social services, and economic complexities, and aware that the origins of our own nation lay partly in the administrative ineptitude of another, these critics concerned themselves less with what the President could or should do than with *how* he might better fulfill his demanding roles.

Regardless of the intrinsic worth of their subsequent proposals, which ranged from the establishment of a plural executive or various types of secretariat to the development of a modified Cabinet system or even the outright abolition of the Presidency, their activities possessed the obvious merit of drawing intelligent attention to the danger, then obscured by the glow of the Roosevelt personality, of administrative impotence and obsolescence within the Executive. Along with the Committee's recommendations, moreover, they contributed to the climate in which Congress was persuaded to take the first important step toward the modernization of the Presidential Office.

COMMENTING on this step—the Reorganization Act of 1939—Robert Sherwood once quipped that it proved as great an asset to F.D.R. as the invention of radio. In any event, it remedied at a stroke the total deficiency of an institutionalized Presidential staff while transferring to an Executive office jurisdiction over various other governmental agencies. That the Bureau of the Budget was one of these in itself accounts for some of the strength gained by the White House, for the President was thus allowed access to every segment of Government in order to determine how money was being spent and to evaluate budget requests. In effect,

Mr. Yearley, a member of the history department at the University of Florida, is a regular contributor to this magazine.

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what the Legislature had taken centuries to consolidate, namely initiative and control in the manipulation of the purse, was overnight partially ceded to the Executive.

However important the Bureau of the Budget, the core of the new organization was the White House Office. The administrative assistants with which it was staffed became personal aides to the President and performed such duties as he directed. Behind the organization as a whole lay the statutory expectation that the Office would facilitate and maintain presidential communications with Congress, including individual Congressmen; with heads of Executive departments and agencies; with the press and other media of information; and with the public. But while evolution of the Executive Office of the President, centering about the subordinate but vital Budget Bureau and White House Office, was still in embryonic stages, the new administrative creations were put to the test, and their anatomy was rapidly fleshed out by the urgent priorities of the second world war.

Whether their subsequent exertions were guided with reasonable efficiency has been debated, but they certainly lacked nothing in the way of gargantuan vigor. By administrative fiat alone, that is, without express statutory authorization by the Congress, the President created most of the familiar, important wartime agencies that dealt with production, defense transportation, shipping, manpower, labor, information, and civilian defense. Furthermore, by presidential directive he extended his administrative arms to embrace such things as economic warfare and price control. Though peace trimmed away much of this growth, the war had made it clearer that sheer administrative power was not likely to be lacking insofar as the Presidency was concerned in time of trial; what was wanted was a matching intelligence and precision to offset the possibilities of creating an administrative Frankenstein's monster.

Consequently, despite the lopping off of wartime agencies, the administrative development of the Presidential staff continued so swiftly under both Presidents Truman and Eisenhower that students of government have been led to suggest that both regimes represent a transition from old- to new-style presidencies; Clinton Rossiter has even hazarded the prophecy that they have marked out a pattern of development that will govern the operations of the Office until the end of the Republic. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that even the Roosevelt staff as it existed during the War has assumed, comparatively speaking, a rather primitive look when viewed in retrospect.

Several things, of course, have conspired to produce this illusion. The levels of expectation regarding presidential performance, for instance, have continued to rise steadily since 1945. That modern Executives can satisfy these expectations through rearing new, or adding to old, administrative structures would seem increasingly unlikely. Reflections of this are obvious in the swelling size of the Executive Office. Mr. Truman, for instance, brought the National Security Council and Central Intelligence under its aegis, and Mr. Eisenhower has since added the Council of Economic Advisors, the Operations Co-ordinating Board, the Office of Defense Mobilization, and an Advisory Committee on Governmental Organization.

Growth, moreover, has been accompanied by changes in the relative importance of agencies and persons functioning within the Executive Office. It is generally acknowledged, for example, that in this context the Bureau of the Budget is relatively less significant than once was the case. Again, the prestige and authority associated with the White House Office have become somewhat greater than the influence of other divisions of the Executive establishment.

And within the White House Office itself enormous power and influence have been placed in the hands of the Assistant to the President. For this man, in fact, there is no close counterpart in our political past. It is true that Presidents have often attracted influential aides, secretaries, or household advisors; George Cortelyou under McKinley, Colonel House with Woodrow Wilson, and the "Brain Trusters" associated with F.D.R. come instantly to mind. But since the responsibility for policy-making now rests so largely with the President, the Assistant stands forth not as an operating officer but as a legally empowered chief of staff, coordinator, and trouble-shooter extraordinaire. General Wilson Persons, who now replaces Sherman Adams, may prove more skillful in preserving his "passion for anonymity" than his predecessor but it is improbable that his influence will be markedly less great. Next to the modern President himself, the Assistant, after all, is thus far the end product of twenty years of effort aimed at reducing unnecessary limitations on Executive action, allaying conflicts within the Administration, and effectively planning for and harmonizing the labors of a huge bureaucratic machine.

EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, at least during the day-by-day workings of government, the Assistant and the administrative body whose functions he oversees must shield the Chief Executive from the fragmentizing impact of the varied national and international interests that bear in upon him. If all these were permitted to register directly on the President, the subsequent dissipation of his time and resources would undoubtedly enfeeble government and curtail that vital ingredient of leadership which Hamilton called "energy in the Executive."

At the present time this administrative "shield" continues to resemble a staff system, a form it assumed rather firmly in the Truman Administrations and one

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which Mr. Eisenhower, naturally, has extended—although whether it will endure long enough to be confirmed by tradition is not yet clear. That it is the most satisfactory method of giving help to the President is questioned. Some experts, for instance, favor a combination of secretariat and staff instead of a staff alone; others would like to see more use made of the Vice President and the Cabinet. Nevertheless, as it exists the staff poses its own problems and suffers from its own inherent limitations.

There is, very importantly, the difficulty of securing high caliber men of dedication whose loyalty to their Chief transforms them into something more than titled blocks on an organizational chart. On the other hand, when a dedicated assistant is found and becomes the alter ego of the President, and there is reason to believe this tended to be the case with Sherman Adams, the chance grows that the President will rise so far above the battle as to behave with less rather than with greater decisiveness.

Furthermore, as Edward H. Hobbs points out, discharging an "alter ego" can be extremely difficult, for it forces the President in effect to record a vote of no confidence in himself. Again, however, the retention of such a man may stimulate the conversion of the Chief Executive into a mere figurehead while the Assistant is transformed into a prime minister.

Similarly, although the staff as a whole is designed in part to shield the President—and admittedly there are matters he is best advised to avoid, for they are apt to become *issues* only after he is involved in them—it must not isolate him from significant conflicts. Should this occur, and some feel that it did, for instance, during the cavortings of McCarthy in the earlier days of the Eisenhower Administration, then the Executive can be expected to demonstrate increasingly frequent flights from reality. In short, there is doubt about just how much harmony any institution in a free society *ought* to tolerate.

Actually, seen in perspective against other obstacles to Presidential performance, these problems created by the staff itself seem relatively unimportant. There are few experts who would deny the Executive's need for administrative aid or attempt to detract from its value; likewise few would refuse him initiative, flexibility, or even added powers of organization so that he might more effectively carry through his program. But all of them are aware that administrative devices alone are neither a panacea for presidential problems, an escape from decision, nor a substitute for creativity.

The truth seems to be that as citizens we are more readily fascinated by prospects of equipping men for space, more intrigued by the managerial capacities of Casey Stengel, than we are by the undramatic task of fitting the President for the obligations of the twentieth century. Thus we tend to deny the President the broad, continuing popular support—the kind that might come from voting him a Congress of his own party—essential for the maximum effectiveness of his actions. Under these circumstances his administrative organization can do little more than refine the atmosphere of crisis in which he must make decisions.

NASSER'S FELLAHIN

Prisoners of the Nile

by EDWARD WAKIN

EGYPTIANS say that the rich eat *ful,* a national dish of stewed beans, in the morning; the poor eat it for lunch; and the animals eat it for supper. In an agricultural country which cannot grow enough food to feed itself, this is a realistic way to characterize the situation.

The world is being treated to the strange sight of Egypt's sword-rattling dictator, Gamal Abdel Nasser, being carried on the shoulders of twenty-four million Egyptians whose lives revolve around one national problem—starvation. For Nasser's Egypt, despite the propaganda of Radio Cairo and the solemn speeches in the United Nations, is the land of *fellahin,* the impoverished prisoners of the soil who comprise more than three-quarters of its population. It is not headline-making Cairo, nor the mysterious, ancient Pyramids.

The faceless fellahin reflect the great realities of Egypt and its regime, just as they are the backdrop to Egypt's international adventures, which range from what seem like hysterical dreams of capturing Middle East oil to blueprints for Egypt's High Dam at Aswan.

Mr. Wakin has written extensively on the problems of the Middle East. This is his first appearance in The Commonweal.

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And the problem of improving the lot of the fellahin is monumental. For all its 380,000 square miles dominating the northeastern corner of the African continent, Egypt can count on less than four per cent of its land as cultivable. Its fellahin barely subsist in their continuous string of villages along the Nile, where they live in an Egypt that almost entirely escapes the attention of the outside world.

The long, slow journey from the Mediterranean to the Sudanese border dramatizes the largely ignored reality of fellahin life by following the ever-changing Nile and its brown line of parallel road. The land, dark green and flat, holds the world's productivity record, and the mud houses reflect a universal low in poverty. There is such fertility that four-fifths of Egypt's cultivated land has three crops a year. But suddenly, as if an arbitrary finger had marked off the boundaries of the Nile's bounty, the fertile land stops, a short distance from each bank of the river, and the desert begins. It all adds up to four per cent of life-giving land versus ninety-six per cent of nothingness.

In the fertile four per cent of a country devoid of rainfall, the Nile waters irrigate the soil and also fertilize with the rich silt delivered during the autumn flood. Nile mud provides building material for homes; its waters are for drinking, washing and swimming, and eventually the river carries the harvest to market.

Fellahin food is limited to the proverbial beans, lentils and a few other vegetables, washed down by quantities of strong tea which is notorious for ruining stomachs and jangling nerves but acts as a stimulant for energies drained by disease. Existing almost without meat in their diet, they live out their lives undernourished and over-worked, persisting in the hope that the Nile will bring enough water at flood-time and that cotton will bring a good price. For, overpopulating the Nile Valley by some eight million, they are forced to grow less food and more cotton because the white gold is the mainstay of the national economy.

THE REALITIES of this fellahin life are far removed from the artificial propaganda trumpets of Cairo and Alexandria. Yet they are inescapable in village after village the full length of the Nile.

Recently I sat in the courtyard of a village holy man in the Nile Delta and witnessed a scene not at all untypical—that of a fellah pleading for land. In a typical gesture of subservience, he kissed the hand of the holy man and then the hand of my guide and host, the eldest son of the village's deceased chief landowner. A victim of one of the eye diseases which have an extraordinarily high incidence in Egypt, the fellah was practically blind, the rims of his eyes encrusted with the scales of disease. He came to beg for the opportunity to rent land, the great dream of fellahin life.

He was sent away, probably to work as a farm laborer, if work were to be found. As a laborer he could earn ten piastres (twenty-eight cents) a day. To buy one acre of land he must have over eleven hundred dollars, about eleven times the annual per capita income. And such is the insecurity of the fellahin that they were grumbling about government plans to enforce a daily minimum wage of eighteen piastres (less than fifty cents) because they were afraid that higher wages would cause landowners to hire fewer people.

Egypt's dictator, Gamal Abdel Nasser, has reportedly said in a cynical moment that these fellahin are his greatest asset: their lot is almost impossible to make harder no matter what the West may do to hinder Egypt. And the home of the fellah is a measure of his impoverished lot. Made of mud strengthened with straw, the structure usually serves for the family and its animals alike. It is even said that the fellah takes better care of his animals than his children, because they represent not only his wealth but the means for cultivating his fields as well.

In the village I was visiting, the inside of a typical home contained one main room for cooking, eating and sleeping. A hole in the roof let in air and light, while one corner was set aside for a few chickens. A mat on the floor comprised its furniture, for the ground is for eating, sleeping and sitting. A householder's wealth, if any existed, would be displayed in the wife's gold bracelets, his animals, land and his hoarded gold. Villagers have never had any faith in paper money, and anyway, a home is no place on which to spend it.

The village school, by contrast, was built of cement, but its depressing interior and ragged children retained the mud of poverty. The distinguishing characteristics of the school seemed to be harsh, unyielding discipline by all the teachers, with only one exception. Investigation disclosed that this teacher was not even supervising his charges but was away working his own fields.

At one point in my tour of the school, a young teacher who had been educated in Cairo apologized for the fellahin children. "You see," he said, "they are very primitive. They have no culture."

The teacher's words echoed those spoken to me by an Egyptian judge, just before he reluctantly returned to Qena province in southern Egypt to "apply modern law to a primitive society." The judge was resuming his duties at the annual sugar cane harvest time, traditionally a season for murder when the tall and obscuring sugar cane stalks enable the fellahin to impose their own law of revenge. In a country where life expectancy has only recently reached forty to fifty years of age, he described the situation: "The fellahin have no sense of the value of life. They have little to eat and little to live for. Why shouldn't they be unfaithful and undependable? I will admit that they are intelligent and quick, but nonetheless, they are immersed in

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the mire of a primitive society with fantastic notions of honor and revenge."

ONE OF THE most depressing facts about contemporary Egypt is the great gap between the literate city Egyptian and the fellah, in psychology and outlook as well as in living standards. Almost no one in the so-called revolutionary generation led by Gamal Abdel Nasser has any stomach for going among the fellahin and working with them in a grass-roots movement to uplift them. The emphasis instead is to legislate and direct from Cairo. I asked many government officials, teachers and journalists if they had ever been to southern Egypt. In every case the person I questioned either answered in the negative or grimaced and said yes, but that he "was glad to get away as quickly as possible."

Father Henry Habib Ayrout, S.J., is one of the most penetrating and knowledgeable observers of the fellahin. In his book, *The Fellaheen,* he has described the crucial problems of these people, learned by working many years with them.

"Progress," he wrote, "must come from some form of release, of emergence, from education in the original sense of the drawing out of potentialities. The true duty of society is to liberate the fellah's spirit from its stifling envelope of mud; to free him from the defects of the soil, while leaving him his good qualities. The initiative can never come from his own community, which is completely numbed and powerless, but only from the classes which overshadow him, from the elite, who with their riches of mind and money can vitalize him. In this dough must work the leaven of intelligence and sympathy."

Although official acts do not inspire literate city Egyptians to any excess of zeal for the fellahin, it is at least fashionable now to talk of "really doing something for these people." Attempts by the Nasser regime to help the fellahin resulted in two legislative gestures: land redistribution and Liberation Province.

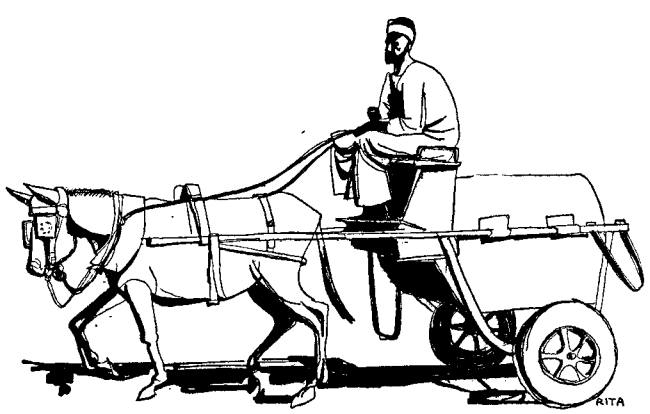
LAND REDISTRIBUTION is probably the most dynamic and possibly the only really constructive aim so far of Nasserism and Arab nationalism. If successful, it would represent an important step toward rejuvenating the fellahin, whose attitudes are reflected in the phrases *"ma alaysh"* (it doesn't matter) and *"bukra"* (tomorrow). In Egypt, the program was begun with considerable fanfare. Of the six million acres suitable for cultivation, ten per cent were made liable to redistribution to fellahin in two- to five-acre lots, with preference going to tenants and laborers actually working the land.

This gesture was not lost on the fellahin, who naturally were happy to learn that there was a government in existence that apparently was concerned about them. Former landowners and intellectuals lamented, however, complaining that the Nasser regime "has given these people a feeling of importance, but has failed to provide an equally necessary commodity, a sense of responsibility." And, in truth, the land redistribution was not even an unmixed blessing in fellahin eyes.

Large landowners had the capital and know-how to handle the problems of renting farm machinery, fertilizing the land and marketing the produce. The Nasser regime, it is pointed out, has been slow in replacing these functions with cooperatives. Furthermore, the fellahin are traditionally suspicious of government, which has always victimized them by taxation and conscription. Even where cooperatives exist and operate, this suspicion continues to assert itself. My host in the Delta village reported that the fellahin are disgruntled about government co-ops because "you can't trust the government to do anything. It spends too much to get things done and then doesn't do them right."

The worst blow to vitalizing the fellahin, however, was the failure of Liberation Province, which took its first settlers in October, 1955, after twenty million dollars was spent in preparation. The government's aim in this project was to reclaim desert land, with the aim of creating a peasant community where social services and modern agricultural methods would combine to provide a self-respecting and dignified way of life for the fellah. As the regime lyrically announced: "Liberation Province was not established simply to expand the area of arable land in the Egyptian Republic and provide a living for 600,000 or 1.2 million of landless inhabitants. There is a higher purpose—the creation of an ideal society."

Despite such visions in the beginning, however, the pilot project for the "ideal society" was suddenly denounced as a seat of corruption, and the whole idea was abandoned. In 1955, when I spent a year in Egypt, Liberation Province was the first place a correspondent was invited to visit. This past summer, no toiler in the vineyard of the Ministry of National Guidance dared even mention it. Souvenirs of the



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project do remain, though. In the Delta village this summer, machinery had just arrived to help the fellahin with their crops. Their markings were clearly those of Liberation Province—a reminder both of failure and of the fact that an effort was made.

WHEN NASSER enthusiasts talk of the current regime in Egypt, it is the effort and intention to help the fellahin that they stress. They can even refuse to see what an outsider sees: that Egypt's cotton crop has been mortgaged to the Soviet Union in exchange for armaments, that the one-crop economy is running a $75 million annual deficit, that economic aid from the West has been turned into economic warfare, that hundreds of much-needed schoolteachers have been sent abroad as propaganda agents, that domestic progress has been sacrificed to international adventures.

Supporters of Nasser speak enthusiastically of the plan for a High Dam at Aswan. This is indeed an imaginative scheme, designed to provide by irrigation an additional two million acres of cultivated land to help keep pace with an annual population increase of half a million. However, the original Western offer of aid, which foundered on Nasser's machinations and Dulles' maneuvering, has been replaced by a Russian deal, arriving two years later and for much less money. Meanwhile, agreement on sharing Nile waters with Egypt's southern neighbor, the Sudan, has been complicated by a coup thwarting Nasser's intrigue in that country. Without such an agreement, there can be no High Dam, despite the brave words of Nasser's followers.

The pattern in Egypt brings to mind the judgment passed on a dying political boss of Philadelphia by Lincoln Steffens during his muckraking days. Disloyalty, Steffens told the boss, was his "great sin." "He was a born leader of the common people, I reasoned; he had taught them to like and trust him, even with their votes; he had gathered up and organized the power which lay in their ballots, their trust and their loyalty to him." But, Steffens told the political boss, he had not used this gigantic trust for the sake of the common people, and thus he had been disloyal to them.

In Egypt, the common people are the fellahin. The fundamental charge that can be made against Nasser and his regime is that same "disloyalty" to the real interests of his people.

AMERICAN TRAGEDY

The Meaning of Racism

by GEORGE H. DUNNE

IN 1896 Mr. Justice Harlan, dissenting from the majority opinion in the unfortunate *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, struck a prophetic vein: "In my opinion, the judgment this day rendered will, in time, prove to be quite as pernicious as the decision made by this tribunal in the Dred Scott case." The decision in the Dred Scott case helped precipitate the tragedy of the Civil War, and in view of that fact Judge Harlan's prophecy might seem faulted with rhetorical exaggeration. In view of other facts, however, his prognostication is a sober and accurate forecast of the event.

Plessy v. Ferguson did not invent the ill-starred "separate but equal" doctrine. But it was *Plessy v. Ferguson* which invested the essentially and, one would think (as Judge Harlan thought), obviously immoral pattern of legally imposed racial segregation with the spurious sanctity of a principle of constitutional law. By giving its blessing to the literally horrible doctrine that Negroes may be legally segregated because they are *by nature* inferior, this decision left them no means of rationalization by which they could reassure themselves of their dignity as human persons. It is true that the majority opinion, possibly conscience-ridden, had taken pains to deny that enforced segregation necessarily implied racial inferiority, but the subterfuge is plain, because the fact was plain, as Judge Harlan fully realized: "What can more certainly arouse race hate, what more certainly create and perpetuate a feeling of distrust between these races, than state enactments which *in fact* proceed on the ground that colored citizens are so inferior and degraded that they cannot be allowed to sit in public coaches occupied by white citizens? That, as all will admit, is the real meaning of such legislation."

If anyone doubts that racial segregation is based solely upon the concept that the white man is *by nature*

Father George H. Dunne, S.J. is the author of the widely-reprinted article, "The Sin of Segregation," published in this magazine in 1945.

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superior and the black man *by nature,* inferior, let him read the preface to The South Carolina Freedmen's Code of 1866. This code was concerned with keeping the freed Negro in his place. It seems to accept the abolition of slavery, albeit perforce, without difficulty, but it is fiercely determined to maintain white supremacy. It rejects with scorn the "willful" doctrine of what it calls certain Republican extremists that *"all* men, irrespective of color, creed or caste, are created with *equal, inherent, natural and inalienable rights."* (The italics, in the original text, suggest the elevated eyebrow, the scandal! that anyone should hold with such an abomination—one of the "abominations" upon which this country was founded!) The code does not leave in doubt the philosophical assumption upon which it bases its doctrine of white supremacy: "They [white and black] are races separate and distinct: the one the highest and noblest type of humanity, the other the lowest and most degraded. Fully recognizing these deeply marked *distinctions of nature* . . . the General Assembly, in instituting the Freedmen's Code, have governed their counsels by wisdom, their measures by moderation, and their principles by justice." (Sic!—italics added.)

THERE IT IS, out in the open. The white man is *by nature* noble; the Negro is *by nature* degraded, a proposition branded by Pope Pius XI as pernicious and heretical and by the Holy Office as "odious" and "utterly absurd."

This is the doctrine espoused by the court in the Dred Scott case. It is the doctrine of The Freedmen's Code of South Carolina and of similar codes adopted in other Southern states after the Civil War. It is the doctrine implicitly accepted, though verbally denied, in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. It is the doctrine of which racial segregation is the liturgical expression.

It is necessary to be clear about this. Segregation itself is not immoral. It is *racial* segregation which is immoral. Segregation itself is morally indifferent. We segregate the mentally ill, the carriers of contagious disease. We segregate from our homes people who spit on the floor or commit other vulgarities. But racial segregation is another matter. It is a totally different matter and it is immoral because it says that a man must be segregated not because he is ill or because he is ill-mannered, but because he is ill by *nature.*

This is heresy of a particularly repulsive sort. *Osservatore Romano,* the semi-official mouthpiece of the Vatican, evidently had this in mind when it commented that "racial segregation, as practiced in the United States, is against the very nature of Christianity." And within the last few weeks the Catholic Bishops of the United States in a joint statement declared unequivocally that racial segregation is immoral and cannot be reconciled "with the Christian view of man's nature and rights." Said the Bishops: "Legal segregation, or any form of compulsory segregation, in itself and *by its very nature* imposes a stigma of inferiority upon the segregated people." (Italics added.)

This is what Justice Harlan said in 1896. This is what Archbishop Ireland, staunch and clairvoyant defender of Christian and of American ideals, had earlier said in 1891. This is what the Warren Court, correcting the tragic mistake of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* court, has been saying in its historic anti-segregation decisions.

FOR OVER fifty years the "gradualists," thanks to their magic "separate but equal" formula (which since it lost its potency under the impact of Supreme Court decisions has been abandoned for the, in the case at issue, equally spurious formula of "States' Rights"), have successfully cooperated with the out-and-out supremacists in subjecting millions of American citizens to a state of degradation which has made the name of America, once a synonym for freedom, an abomination in the eyes of a large part of the human race.

They have not always been successful. The outraged voice of human dignity debauched has on occasion made itself heard, and never more eloquently than in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 1, 1955, when a work-weary Negro seamstress, Mrs. Rosa Parks, ordered by a bus driver to relinquish her seat to a white passenger, quietly refused. Her refusal was literally heard around the world, from Anchorage to Bechuanaland, from Alabama to Siam.

All the years of her life she had taken the perpetual outrage. All the years of her life she had suffered in silence the thousands of sneering voices, the pointing fingers—every "whites only" sign a voice jeering, every racial ban a finger pointing. Now, at long, long last, she had had it. "I can take it no longer," she said, and quietly submitted to arrest.

The sequel is well known. When news of her arrest spread, it quickly become apparent that almost the entire Negro community of Montgomery had, like Mrs. Parks, passed the point of tolerance. They too could take it no longer. Everyone who reads newspapers, here and abroad, knows their story: how for twelve long months they held fast to their refusal to ride the buses. They preferred, as they put it, to walk in dignity rather than ride in ignominy. They maintained their solidarity and their morale in the face of every kind of pressure brought to bear upon them. They withstood not only intimidation and threats, but actual violence—homes were bombed—without once retaliating. Their steadfast adherence to a policy of positive but non-violent resistance added a shining chapter to the already splendid history of Negro forbearance through two hundred fifty years of slavery and ninety

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years of segregation. And their remarkable behavior was largely due to the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr., a young Protestant minister, whose quite extraordinary intellectual, spiritual and moral qualities made it inevitable that leadership of the protest would gravitate to him.

In *Stride Toward Freedom* (Harper. $2.95.), Dr. King has now written the story of the Montgomery protest, its background, origin, its trials and tribulations, and its ultimate victory. The book is also a mirror of his own exceptionally endowed mind and heart. His deep understanding of the real nature of segregation and of its manifold effects seems remarkable in a young man of twenty-nine years, until one remembers that he has lived every moment of those twenty-nine years face to face with the problem and that he is an unusually sensitive and serious thinker.

"I could never adjust to the separate waiting rooms, separate eating places, separate rest rooms, partly because the separate was always unequal, and partly because the very idea of separation did something to my sense of dignity and self-respect."

HERE IS the insight into the real nature of racial segregation which makes it worse than legal servitude in the sense that it leaves no refuge, however specious, however paltry, where one's sense of self-respect can find sanctuary. One must be separated not because one is unclean, foul-mannered, gross, not even because one is a slave, but because, however cultivated, however sensitive, however intelligent, however "free," one is still tainted *by nature*. Justice Harlan had this insight, but because his colleagues did not, millions of God's children have had to endure, and now endure, the cruel aggressions which he presciently warned would follow their decision.

During the Montgomery protest, when the issue was still in doubt, I received a letter from a non-Negro friend, a resident of Montgomery, who made the following observation: "Sometimes I think it is an occasion of sin just to live in the South." The statement is extreme, but one can understand what he meant. How could one live in the South without observing the racial tabus, and how could one observe the racial tabus without cooperating in evil? Sensitive to the denigration of human dignity implicit in the system, he was inclined to feel that his every observance of the legally imposed tabus was a cooperation with evil.

That is how Martin Luther King felt about it and that is how he brought the Negro community to feel about it. "I came to see," writes King, "that what we were really doing was withdrawing our cooperation from an evil system, rather than merely withdrawing our economic support from the bus company. . . . We were simply saying to the white community, 'We can no longer lend our cooperation to an evil system.'"

Stride Toward Freedom should be required reading for every segregationist, as well as for everyone who respects human dignity, human freedom, human courage. Of course it is doubtful that segregationists will understand the book. Certainly they will not understand Martin Luther King, least of all when he writes of forbearance, and patience, and of agapé, and of nonviolent resistance, and about why the white man, deeply scarred by segregation, desperately needs the Negro's love. They will not understand because their minds have been corroded.

Martin King understands this and he makes excuses for them: "They say the things they say about us and treat us as they do because they have been taught these things. From the cradle to the grave, it is instilled in them that the Negro is inferior. Their parents probably taught them that; the schools they attended taught them that; the books they read, even their churches and ministers, often taught them that; and above all the very concept of segregation teaches them that. The whole cultural tradition under which they have grown—a tradition blighted with more than two hundred fifty years of slavery and more than ninety years of segregation—teaches them that Negroes do not deserve certain things. So these men are merely the children of their culture. When they seek to preserve segregation they are seeking to preserve only what their local folkways have taught them was right."

Finally, there is a species of malice in racial segregation even more evil than the injustice imposed upon the Negro. Upon reflection it becomes clear that the denigration of the Negro is not the final purpose of segregation. The Negro is degraded thereby to exalt the white. The ritual of segregation is directed not so much at denying the diginity of the Negro as at extolling beyond measure the dignity of the white. The former is almost incidental to the latter; it is a means to an end. White Supremacy is the end. It is the idol, and the deepest malice of racial segregation lies in this terrible and idolatrous pride of race which it serves. This explains why fervent segregationists present all the marks of religious fanatics.

Perhaps, on second thought, it was this aspect of the matter more than the other which *Osservatore Romano* had in mind when it remarked that "racial segregation, as practiced in the United States, is against the very nature of Christianity."

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QUESTIONS, ANSWERS

ON three Sundays in January, Father Walter J. Ong, S.J. and I carried on a question-and-answer dialogue over the N.B.C. Catholic Hour. Our general topic was "Freedom and the American Catholic." I prepared the questions carefully, but Father Ong, though he was aware of the general areas of discussion in advance, did not know what specific questions he would be asked. His responses therefore were spontaneous and unrehearsed.

I was not only permitted, I was encouraged to ask any questions that struck me as significant. I chose to ask those questions which seemed to me to represent the concerns that many people, both in and out of the Church, have about Catholicism in this country. The following questions and answers, in abbreviated form, have been excerpted from the text of the three broadcasts.

Q. In view of the Church's claim to be the one true Church of Christ, acting with His authority, is the Church in this country [where Catholicism is treated as just one religion among many] only making the best of things? If it had the power to do so, would it insist on special legal recognition?

A. In the U.S., of course, the Church is dealing with a government which, in many ways, is radically different from earlier types of governments with which she has been used to dealing. I believe that in general the Church is quite content with the present American situation. And I don't believe there is a threat of the sort you suggest here.

Q. What about places where Catholics are in the majority? In those places there are often severe limitations on religious freedom and the equality before the law of other religious groups.

A. They are certainly not models. We must not make the mistake of considering one concrete, existing system as a model system. . . . The Church has to deal with different societies in terms which these societies accept.

Q. Some of the most prominent theologians in the Church, even some American theologians, argue that though our Constitution, with its doctrine of separation of church and state, is acceptable to Catholics, given the situation that prevails right now, the situation is not ideal. Ideally, they say, the Catholic Church should enjoy special rights and what has been called the favor of the laws.

A. I think again that we are faced with a new situation in America with our government of limited authority. In this situation we have something we have to think through. We don't have a ready prepared logic for this, coming out of the past.

Q. What do *you* understand by the principle of separation of Church and State? How do you read the First Amendment?

A. The principle as I would understand it, in general, allowing for refinements of various sorts, is that our government is a government of limited sovereignty; it does not pretend to competence in the field of theology or philosophy; it does not act as a church might act; it leaves decisions in these areas to the individual. So it is limited by this fact. . . . As a consequence the Church must realize in thinking about the American government and in thinking about American citizenship that she is dealing with a government that does not have theological pretensions, and that she is dealing with a government which will allow to anyone, otherwise qualified, full exercise of citizenship without any qualification, positive or negative, based on religious grounds. That is, a person does not have to belong to this church or that church or he doesn't *not* have to belong to this church or that church.

Q. Do you think the leaders of the Church in this country understand that?

A. Yes, I think in a practical way they do. Catholic theology, though, is still dealing with the problem. And there are large areas in it which have to be explored and worked out theoretically. But I think practically we are really working with it.

Q. In the interests of public morality Catholics have been known to boycott movies and picket them, and in some cases have been instructed to blacklist certain theatres over a period of time for having shown offensive films. Now this may look like the simple exercise of a democratic right to Catholics. To non-Catholics it often looks like attempts at thought control and censorship. It seems as if Catholics are using their power and their influence to determine what other people may, or may not, see or read.

A. First of all, it is certainly not at all against our democratic tradition to have picket lines, to protest, and to protest in a loud voice, to make your opinions felt. . . . On the other hand, it may well be that people who are not Catholics look on this particular right as an attempt at thought control, as an attempt to force people to take the Catholic position to which they cannot subscribe in conscience. If this is true, then a Catholic has to think through the problem, more particularly the hierarchy who are the voice of the Church in these matters, has to think through it and try to figure out what to do in this case. It may very well be that this particular right should not be exercised at certain times.

JOHN COGLEY.

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THE STAGE

LIFE AND THE DREAM

IT IS curious that Chekhov in his early study "Ivanov," and Mr. S. N. Behrman, in his account of life's disproportion to the dream, "The Cold Wind and the Warm", both turn their circumspect moralities on figures of a fatal and self-destructive irresolution. The "Ivanov" *(at the Renata),* anchored in a familiar rhythm of deceleration, will alter nothing of the Chekhov image, but Mr. Behrman is to be freshly seen in "The Cold Wind and the Warm" *(at the Morosco).* He has put aside the mask of urbanity to take up a remembered weight of youth, that scattered substance whose texture he sees often in the primary colors of Jewish *gemutlichkeit,* but no less so, and ultimately, in the darker shades of thwarted idealism and the imperfect will. And what I should call this ambition of chiaroscuro—Mr. Behrman's avowed duality of tone—is at once the wreckage and the salvation of his play, its latent, distinguished impulse, and the energy which compels for it more than the authority of nostalgia.

Mr. Behrman is not a presence for my generation, though one might note the irony of condescension to a comic method with—about it, at least—a vestigial radiance, by those who can imagine no more than the debased coinage of wit. Mr. Harold Clurman, whose very production of "The Cold Wind and the Warm" this is, sees Mr. Behrman as a buried poet, whose work is a variation on themes of tender disillusion: its constant figures are the "witness," the young man disabused of his innocence as to the world's venality; the heroic idealist, unsullied by compromise and come to offer life more abundantly; at last, the lady of sympathy, who must dissent from his grand though uncomfortable folly. It is an intelligible pattern of American experience, and its restatement, in "The Cold Wind and the Warm," derives a sharper pathos from the ambiance of rabbinical order and piety, than ever it did from glamours of borrowed elegance. Where the scheme falters is in Mr. Behrman's inability, on this occasion, to make of the "witness" and the elusive lady, personages of complex or valuable force: he, wearily, is but another fretful adolescent (whining in performance if not in fact), and she has only the limited command of sensual presence. We are hardly to be detained by such ciphers, and Mr. Behrman's insistence on their consequence imposes a muddiness of focus from which his play rarely comes into clarity.

The excellence of this defect is to permit a various, sobering account of the third voice in the Behrman trio: the visionary brought to harsh book by time. This friendly contagion of idealism, the open face of inquiry he turns towards all life's enigma and allure, Mr. Behrman regards with a puzzled tenderness. He remarks the masked egotism, the radical instability and refusal of time or commitment which lie at the heart of the romantic dream, but he is not reconciled to the withering of that. And the suicide which confirms its surrender, he records, in "The Cold Wind and the Warm," with all the blunt inexplicability of life: a failure of art, one might observe, for the mind has questions too, but a flaw bred at least in compassion, and knowledge that the heart must sometimes move to resolution within an unsearchable and rigorous fatality.

Mr. Behrman cannot bring himself quite to acquiesce either in life or the dream; his vacillation distills often a wry poetry of loss, but equally with that, the wish that a more incisive habit of passion or mind might have carried the whole to a truly elegiac pitch. The moral structure of "The Cold Wind and the Warm" is insufficiently built, its weight of sensibility excessive. Quite other, indeed, from "Ivanov," which is, for all the rustle and patina of its admirable production at the Renata, a work of exacerbated moral vehemence. Chekhov has taken here—my source is Mr. David Magarshack's *Chekhov the Dramatist*—a stock figure out of his contemporary literature and society: the romantic hero *manqué,* reckless with his youth's optimism and energy, but unstable, by thirty-five given over to disappointment, apathy, nervous debility and guilt, one of those who do not solve problems but are crushed under their weight; he has taken this man, and exposed him to one of the most annihilating inquisitions in drama. What emerges is a study in the pathology of inadequacy, but the enterprise has not that poise of justice which is, elsewhere, supremely Chekhov's grace: this ineffectual is a moral *donnée,* without possibility of development or mediation, and Chekhov harasses him to suicide with a rancor rooted, ironically, in distrust of that very idealism to which Mr. Behrman is so gentle.

And in this duality of national attitude, we may read again that legend of innocence and experience which is so much a motif of our art and our life: the cultivated American sympathy to the way of spirit, however irresolute or obscure, and the something like grief—the homage, one might say, a utilitarian society pays to what it must destroy—when that goes under to necessity or circumstance or power. There is this clear dream, then, of a freedom not incompatible with fate, and then there is the soiled European wisdom of limitation and the cost of things: of man's inconstancy of will, the torpor and egotism of his days, of rage at his intimate triviality, and the exhausted knowledge that all his flesh is grass.

It would be excessive to claim for "Ivanov" and "The Cold Wind and the Warm" any last authority or reconstitution of vision. Chekhov's *grisaille* is alive in

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its mezzotints, but without the decision of line he was later to command. Mr. Behrman uncertainly deepens the insights of comedy into pathetic tenderness. I should like to claim for this last play, however—and however faulty it may be in technique or performance—a certain poignant stir, the reaching after a more distinguished quality of being, which cannot fail to touch one. Mr. Harold Clurman has staged the play with an effort to snare this elusive, buried poetry. The quiet of his method, its delicate assumption and fidelity, projects often a luminous tone, but the play's technical instability, a prosaic clutter of décor, and considerable variety in the quality of performing as often as not defeat this. I must dissent again from the general praise for Miss Maureen Stapleton: her work quite simply never seems authentic to me, though I recognize this as a temperamental bias. Mr. Eli Wallach is probably miscast as the broken idealist, but his geniality adds savor to the fable, and he is—who would deny?—hampered by a role which is more concept than embodiment. Mr. Behrman's Jewish humors may want the stain of freshness, but they are executed, by Messrs. Sig Arno and Sanford Meisner, with superb effrontery and panache.

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

NO BANG, NO WHIMPER

THIS WEEK brings several tries, all of which are scaled to adult audiences and have various assets, but none of which quite makes the grade. Producers Martin Jurow and Richard Shepherd gathered an impressive cast for their first production; and their handsome Technicolor picture, "The Hanging Tree," at least aims to be a thoughtful and off-beat western. The main trouble with it, however, is that its plot, stemming from Dorothy M. Johnson's novelette, tries to crowd too much into its 106-minute running time. Director Delmer Daves, who knows how to make outdoor movies that have some depth in characterization, is so busy packing his picture with incident after incident that he has little time to develop his trouble-laden characters; even those that get started never seem to arrive.

Gary Cooper plays a frontier doctor who turns up in 1873 at a rough-and-ready gold camp in Montana; in spite of his wild temper and violent past, he is a skilled medical man and he tends his patients with care. He saves a young lad (Ben Piazza) from an angry mob whose leader (Karl Malden) shot the youth for stealing gold. Later he patiently cares for and restores a Swiss woman (Maria Schell) who was badly burned and blinded by the sun. Although he displays a certain kindness toward these two, who continue to live with him, he also holds them in a strange sort of bondage.

Instead of concentrating exclusively on this odd and interesting threesome, the film jumps all over the lot with melodramatic hokum that winds up with Cooper being dragged off to the hanging tree. But have no fear for Gary—the mean people of this uncivilized community are a greedy lot more concerned with gold than justice, and Maria knows how to handle them. It is made clear at the film's beginning that every mining camp had to have its hanging tree to make folks feel respectable. The picture also has a theme song with a jolly tune and appropriately grim words about "The Hanging Tree."

IT IS HARD to figure out why Sidney Harmon wanted to make a new version of "Anna Lucasta," Philip Yordan's 1944 stage play that turned up as a mediocre movie in 1949. Harmon's production has a good all-Negro cast and a script written by Philip Yordan himself. But the result is still a mediocre movie. Its story, about a prostitute who was kicked out by her father and then brought home again when her family hope to marry her off to a man with money, is still old-fashioned melodrama. The realistic photography and sets make Yordan's story and dialogue seem even more contrived. Furthermore, the cast, under Arnold Laven's direction, use such a variety of acting styles that the piece seems inconsistent.

In spite of her sensuous slithering as the bad Anna and demure eyelash-fluttering as Anna-at-home, Eartha Kitt is quite effective in the title role; and so is Sammy Davis, Jr., as her jittery, jumpy lover. In the meantime, Rex Ingram, as Anna's father, whose interest in her is more than parental, whoops it up in the grand ham manner; while Frederick O'Neal, as Anna's scheming brother-in-law, carries on as if he were satirizing Iago on an Amos 'n' Andy program; and Henry Scott walks through the role of the noble and moneyed young farm boy as if the whole thing were distasteful to him.

Curiously enough, in spite of its faults, the film becomes absorbing; and the viewer finds himself pulling for Anna, who got such a raw deal in life and now really tries to start over when she and the farm boy fall in love. Perhaps if the first third of the movie had been shortened, if Yordan had brought his dialogue up to date, and if Director Arnold Laven had been tougher with his actors, "Anna Lucasta" might have been worth the making.

I DOUBT if changes could have made "The Remarkable Mr. Pennypacker" really funny. It is a one-joke movie in which the joke wears thin long before the film is over. Clifton Webb plays the title

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role with his usual tartness, portraying a man of very advanced ideas for 1890, among them being his insistence that the marriage pattern is medieval. So he shifts every month from Harrisburg to Philadelphia, and conveniently maintains a home and family in each city. The story is mainly concerned with the family in Harrisburg and what happens when Mrs. Pennypacker (charmingly played by Dorothy McGuire) and the eight offspring there discover the ménage in Philadelphia with nine more Pennypackers, also sired by the remarkable Mr. P.

Obviously Director Henry Levin can't do much more than introduce these seventeen Pennypackers, but he does succeed in showing two happy households overflowing with young people, played by David Nelson, Jill St. John, Ray Stricklyn and fourteen others—plus Ron Ely as a young man courting Jill. Jill's forthcoming marriage, after Mrs. Pennypacker learns of the family in Philadelphia, is needless to say considerably upset. Although aging Clifton Webb looks and acts more like the children's grandfather, this role is played by the highly indignant Charles Coburn. In case you don't stay with this to the finale, it is only fair to tell you that Mr. Pennypacker, who examined the laws and found them wanting, loves all his children equally and blames Dorothy for the whole thing.

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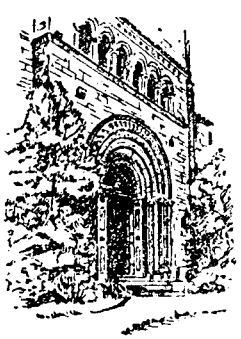

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COMMUNICATIONS

"RELIGION ON THE STAGE"

New York, N. Y.

TO THE EDITORS: In an editorial in the Jan. 16th issue entitled "Religion on the Stage" you came down on me, hard, and not altogether without justice, for misinterpreting a key scene, of "The Power and the Glory" in my review in the *Village Voice*—the scene where the priest sees the wine drunk before his eyes by the brutal cop-politicians who have just sold it to him. I had written *liquor* in the review, not wine, and there was indeed some ambivalence as to whether the horror of the moment didn't lie, for me, in the priest's desperate need of drink for himself, rather than his equally urgent need to obtain wine for the Mass.

May I in some slight extenuation plead that it was a case more of confusion than simple ignorance? It seems to me that in the Phoenix adaptation of Graham Greene's beautiful novel—I tried to say some of this in the review—it is precisely an enormous over-attention to mechanical detail that tends to dissipate the deep poetic strength of the book. I admit that as the play went along I began to get careless about distinguishing between wine, brandy, whiskey, tequilla, and just plain unidentified liquor, but I would claim that these distinctions eventually get somewhat lost in the shuffle of the present adaptation. I admit that I should have reread the book first, which often I do but here I did not. I even admit I was dense to the point of irresponsibility; and the first terrible instant I saw the review staring up at me from the printed page, I suddenly realized just how dense I had been. But I do not admit that I do not or did not know, or care, that bread and wine are necessary for the celebration of Mass.

JERRY TALLMER.

Mr. Tallmer's letter does much to restore our faith in critics in general and in Mr. Tallmer in particular. And as people who often have second thoughts once the first are fatally committed to print, we sympathize with his slip. It remains unfortunately true, however, that what was inadvertence in his review was clearly ignorance in reviews by other critics.

THE EDITORS.

Los Angeles, Calif.

TO THE EDITORS: The editorial "Religion on the Stage" [Jan. 16] raises timely questions about the occasional immaturity of critics but why should anyone be surprised at this spiritual aridity—especially, the editors of The Commonweal?

One of the founding fathers of The Commonweal,

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the late Richard Dana Skinner, dealt with this matter at some length in a memorable lecture for the National Catholic Theatre Conference in a seminar at Fordham some twenty years ago.

Mr. Skinner pointed out that it takes a certain awareness of values held in common to make the theatre a place for instant communication between actor, audience and playwright. The diversities in culture, which are so often the strength of a democratic society, can be the cause of much confusion in the theatre.

When the curtain went up on a Broadway play—even twenty years ago—there were only a few remaining themes on which you could get an immediate sense of recognition, either in agreement or disagreement. We had divided and re-divided so many times that the same words no longer meant the same things. One could still write and talk about home, love, honor, loyalty, heaven, hell, God—but how many theatregoers felt the same way about any of these concepts? How many still do?

This may explain why many American playwrights find the European theatre hospitable and stimulating. In France and Germany, for instance, the audiences may not agree with your point of view but they are familiar with the traditions which inform that point of view. So are the critics. The result: the playwright has a much wider range in which to work and a new play has a good chance to find its particular public. This is notably true in Germany (West), where there is a large number of theatres and where theatregoing, for many generations, has been a vital part of community life. It is also true in London, where the high quality of the acting and the low cost of production have attracted playwrights from all over the world.

One qualification might be made to this glowing report. In Europe as here there are recurring fashions and styles. Some themes are always more popular than others and yet there is a difference in judgment, even with the very popular plays. A play is accepted for what it is. It is not regarded as a platform upon which a critic is standing for reelection. It is looked upon as an imaginative excursion, a rearrangement of life for a few moments in the world of make believe. A critic can like the play or he can reject it, without feeling that he has made a life-long commitment for or against a particular idea or philosophy.

All of which raises one more question. What are playwrights to do? Are they to move to Europe in large numbers merely because the theatre climate is congenial and the basic unities more readily recognized?

Well, Mr. Skinner had the answer to this question too. He urged his hearers at the Fordham lecture—among them this correspondent—to consider at times the desirability of making an "equivalent" statement in a frame of reference which an American audience might find more familiar and therefore more satisfying.

This will explain why one playwright in due time moved on from "Second Spring," an unproduced play about Cardinal Newman, to "The Magnificent Yankee," a produced play about Mr. Justice Holmes. To be sure, Newman is not Holmes and Holmes is not Newman. But there were certain values which they held in common, the same values that Holmes shared in his lifetime with Canon Sheehan. . . .

Let us all remember Dana Skinner in our prayers: a great critic, a great human being.

EMMET LAVERY.

Our thanks to Mr. Lavery, who is, of course, the author of "Second Spring" and "The Magnificent Yankee" and a long-time friend and contributor to our pages. THE EDITORS.

BOOKS

A Last Assertion of Personal Being

THE POORHOUSE FAIR. By John Updike. Knopf. $3.50.

By RICHARD GILMAN

WE HAVE with us, to be sure, the uprising in San Francisco, but the present is plainly a period of literary retrenchment. For some time now we have been circumscribing our fields, consolidating our gains and being satisfied with mild discoveries and advances that resemble the descents of small birds upon smaller worms.

John Updike is a small bird, of beautiful plumage and the sharpest beak imaginable. His first novel, *The Poorhouse Fair,* while betraying some of the deficiencies of our new mood of caution, has all its virtues too. It is bone-dry, with nothing excessive and nothing misplaced. It relies more directly on language than on thought, takes the closest insight as most useful and permits to metaphor a stabbing or flashing action but never an all-encompassing one. Turning a narrow plot of ground, it achieves the rarity of bounded, native truth, and comes forth as microcosm.

The Poorhouse Fair unfolds during a single day and upon a single scene. The poorhouse of the title, mythically situated in New Jersey, is occupied by elderly and ancient men and women who every year are allowed to stage a fête during which they set up stands and amid bunting and colored lights sell comforters, peach-stone carvings and penny candy to their visiting neighbors, while a uniformed band plays Sousa marches on the porch.

So it has always been. But on this particular fair-day everything converges toward a point of moral

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tension unprecedented in the dimflowing lives of the inhabitants. An opportunity for protest, for a last assertion of personal being, presents itself. Living stripped on the extreme edge of society's tolerance, the old people have let themselves be helped along to the grave. Now they turn on the young sociology-minded director of the home, whose vision of a clean ample future free of gods and suffering is the implicit denial of their present needful humanity. They shower him with an ineffectual rain of stones, and thereby tip the balance toward something rich, unknown and saving.

This is the "action" of *The Poorhouse Fair*. But its true activity goes on beneath narration, like a humming around a core of vision or the breathing of language upon the coals of experience. Updike sees and hears before he judges or constructs; his prose aims at the immaculate immediacy of things perceived and at the freshest rhythms of intuited life. It modulates with absolute sureness from one sensory realm to another, from sight to sound, in order to establish oneness and simultaneity. And its unit of drama is the sentence.

This supple, most accurate prose is also capable of delights beyond itself—knowledge, insight, the restitution of truth displaced by sentiment. Updike has a marvelous understanding of old age (he is, remarkably, only twenty-six), but it is less philosophical than imaginative. He reveals it the way the aged experience it but cannot say: as the creaking of an inner bough, the attenuation of a wire, a dance of sorrow in the stillness of time.

". . . Hook felt the small condensed grief—that the past was so far, the end so near—secreted safe within his system well up and fill his head so exactly the thin arcs of his eyes smarted with what they contained."

Occasionally, Updike's hunger for precision leads him into a false approximation of it, into blueprints and a diction more proper to mathematics: ". . . a net of dark wrinkles had been thrown across his face, and his features seemed bright things pinned at the interstices of these diagonals."

Occasionally, too, his book suffers from what Pascal described as the wearying effect of continuous eloquence. He would profit from knowing that it is in the spaces between images that their resonance is nurtured and maintained.

Still, such overloading and being forced to maneuver at close quarters is one of the prices we pay for the loss of range and dimension in the novel. To people who write books about the path literature should take, this is no doubt alarming. Others will understand that one does the best one can, needlework where the big structures are impossible, small weights hefted and known in the hand where to wrap our arms around anything is denied us.

What Updike has held lovingly and explored in his hand is more worthy to be made known than all the paper towers and dragons of our hyperbolic age. And it is most worthy of being known in its own right.

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Roughing It

THE PISTOL. By James Jones. Scribners. $3.

By WILLIAM JAMES SMITH

MUCH OF the best of American literature has been inspired by a lady who can only be described as the Awkward Muse. She has had her ten thumbs in a good many literary pies that have turned out very well indeed despite her assistance—from Melville all the way down to Tennessee Williams. From this odd circumstance it is perhaps understandable that we have veered toward the notion that whatever is awkward must be talented. Awkwardness has the connotations of rough virtue and pioneering sturdiness and all that is admirably American. Any novel that comes along replete with Wolfean gaucherie must automatically be as good, therefore, as Wolfe. If it is as rambling and ungrammatical as Faulkner it must be as good as Faulkner. The cries of the beat generation aspire to the size of the barbaric yawp, but often the beat is mere bleat.

James Jones is among those who have attempted, in all innocence, to capitalize on this confusion of values, casting rough-cut stones before the public in the naive conviction that they are valuable for being unpolished. The difference boils down to this: Melville's *Redburn* or *White-Jacket* is unpolished diamond; James Jones' latest book, *The Pistol,* is unpolished glass.

After a novel like *Some Came Running,* one is tempted in simple decency to say that its successor, *The Pistol,* is a better book. It is, but beyond that it is difficult to go. Perhaps a case could be made out for its being ten times as good since it is only one-tenth as long. But while *The Pistol* avoids some of the horrors of *Some Came Running* by simple elimination, it perpetuates and emphasizes some of Mr. Jones' worst shortcomings. It is, for one thing, repetitious to the point of inanity. Never has one man said so few things so many times in so brief an expanse.

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But a more serious flaw of the book is its failure to achieve any sort of artistic unity. The story is a simple one: Corporal Mast, an American infantryman in Hawaii on Pearl Harbor day, chances to have in his possession a pistol, since he has just come off guard duty; in the ensuing confusion he manages to hold on to the pistol for several months as a half-magical protection against an imaginary Japanese major who is about to split him with a samurai sword. Finally, however, the supply clerk picks it up. Even on its simple narrative level the story does not manage to be very interesting. For a time it looks as though Mr. Jones were going to Discover the Symbol. It is the only artistically admirable thing in the book that he manages to skirt this issue.

Symbol or no symbol, however, the book does not add up. It is not a short story or a novel or anything else. It does not even have the formless form of the historical narrative. It is no more than an intolerably drawn-out "incident," hoked up with a little spurious "simplicity" to look as though it meant something. Mr. Jones' Corporal is a "real" and appealing person and his predicament is both sympathetic and amusing in its way. Perhaps that is enough for a transient literary work.

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A very slightly different book could have been the unpolished diamond that Mr. Jones was apparently hoping for. But it falls short, and the difference is fatal.

Journey to Truth

EVERY EYE. By Isobel English. Crowell. $3.

By RICHARD HORCHLER

THAT ISOBEL ENGLISH possesses a rare and delicate talent is known to the readers of The Commonweal who have savored her short stories in these pages. The characteristics of the stories—keen social observation, psychological insight, profound human sympathy and, above all, a meticulous use of language—are all to be found in this novel, a work which seems to me a kind of exemplum of what Miss English can, and can't, do.

Every Eye is primarily a character study, the exploration and revelation of a single personality, that of the narrator-heroine, in a painful exercise in self-discovery. This woman, newly and uneasily married to a husband younger than herself, is strangely shocked by news of the death of her aunt, and by the prospect of a symbolic honeymoon journey to an exotic Balearic island. She thinks through the stages of her curious, ambivalent relationship with the dead woman, including her own "ugly duckling" adolescence, her bizarre love affair with a man old enough to be her father, and the dead woman's shifting role in her life as confidante, friend and tormentor. The progression through the events of the past is matched by a simultaneous progression in her present relationship with her husband and in the journey to the island of Ibiza.

This is all the plot there is in *Every Eye*, but it is quite enough to support it. If anything, it might even be said that there is too much plot, particularly at the end of the novel, where the pieces of the puzzle are fitted together with a snap that is uncomfortably loud. At any rate, the interest and value of Miss English's book are not in "story," but in the sudden flash of an insight, the swift re-creation of an individual scene or incident, the communication of the most fragile and elusive emotion.

Miss English writes like an im-

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pressionist poet, the images welling up effortlessly and endlessly, sliding into one another in a beautiful and convincing record of human thought and experience. Indeed the greater part of this little book, excluding only the somewhat faltering beginning and rather mechanical conclusion, seems almost a poem, rich, sustained and deeply affecting. It is a measure of the book's emotional power that a single, unfortunate grammatical error, midway through the novel, is as shocking and intolerable as a stain in a beautiful garment.

In its lack of interest in anything outside its own personal, interior concerns, *Every Eye* is a limited, undeniably slight novel, very different from the big social document which is the typically American conception of the form. On its own terms, however, and acknowledging the limitations of those terms, *Every Eye* is a work of incontrovertible artistry, a work of truth, understanding and haunting beauty.

REVIEWERS

Richard Gilman, a poet and critic, is a regular contributor.

William James Smith is an editor of *Atomic Industrial Forum*.

Richard Horchler is an associate editor of The Commonweal.

ART

Two Modes of Criticism

WHEN SOMEONE recently inquired if Bernard Berenson (born in 1865) was still alive, he received the reply: "Oh yes! Alive and kicking." It suddenly seemed as if the old-fashioned phrase were made to order to describe the continued existence of this distinguished and cantankerous art scholar and critic. The suggestion has even been made, by C. Gould, reviewing Berenson's latest book *Essays in Appreciation* for the magazine *Apollo,* that an acid temperament contributes to longevity in writers of criticism, and some additional data is brought out to support the star example of this not very scientific conclusion.

However this may be, it does seem clear that Berenson's energetic dislikes opposed to his likes set up a tension that contributes to his literary excellence in no small degree, so that his essays achieve an interior dynamic coherence—a coherence supported by his vast knowledge and sensibility — that makes each essay a minor work of art.

Even when the protagonist of Berenson's dislike does not appear in one of his studies in person, as it were, it is there as a latent force against which his structure is built. An example of this is the essay on Tiepolo in the *Essays on Appreciation,* unusually amiable in tone, but where one feels, behind the almost lyrical description of the artist's delightful colors and use of forms in space, an implied antagonism to all those who place too little value on these elegant and illusionary qualities in art.

Furthermore, in numerous asides to the reader, Berenson keeps alive his contributory "dislikes": e.g., "dry scholarship," over-emphasis on technique, disagreeable subject matter. "I am concerned with what an artist comes to, more than in the question of how he got there and from where he started . . . those matters no longer interest me"; "Technique in the narrowest sense is no more our concern as art lovers than the cooking of a meal we consume"; and, comparing Tiepolo's draughtsmanship to that of Toulouse-Lautrec, he says of the latter, "we admire his draughtsmanship while we vomit over his subject matter."

This last sentence shows a degree of literary over-expressiveness that Berenson himself deplores in art. One of his best post-war works. *Piero de la Francesca, or the Ineloquent in Art,* is dedicated to praise of "non-expressiveness" or, if you wish to look at it from the other side, to blame of its opposite, despite his own indulgence in it.

The two-sided nature of Berenson's approach leads him often into contradictions. For instance, despite the remark quoted above, more than half the *Essays in Appreciation* are scholarly and historical in content, although in no sense can this be called dry scholarship, suffused as it is with the vivid personal energy of the author's style. In fact, personal enthusiasm may be said to be both Berenson's greatest asset and the root of his worst faults: his scholarship and judgments are made vivid by his intense personal feeling but the con-

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I find that it is not possible for me to give adequate praise to *Worship* in the space alloted. It is sound and scholarly—but at the same time lively and direct. Probably most of its readers are priests, but it is written and edited for all Catholics.

The subject matter and purpose of the magazine do not vary from issue to issue: *Worship* is published to help people understand the Mass and the sacraments. Yet there is tremendous variety in its pages; perhaps the first and possibly the most valuable educational experience one gets from it is the realization of the ties between liturgy and life.

Worship treats of the social order, religious sociology, music, art, and architecture, of the psychology of modern man, the meaning of sacrifice, liturgical reforms, and of the participation of the laity in the prayer-life of the Church.

I said it was for "all Catholics," but there must be a reservation. Though *Worship* is "popular" in the sense of being non-technical, it asks serious work and some background of its readers. Given the work, the background could be derived (over a number of issues) from the magazine itself.

— Robert Hoyt in *The Kansas City—St. Joseph Register*

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clusions he draws from them often seem lop-sided. The humanist seems perhaps all too human in this. He is led not only into contradictions in his appraisal of contemporary art, which he utterly rejects as a return to "savagery" on the one hand and on the other as "geometrizing and abstracting" (in another recent book, *Seeing and Knowing)* but he is drawn also to concluding that the some thousand years from the reign of Constantine to the advent of Giotto constitute simply another lapse from grace in the world of art. His predilections lead him both to appreciate intensely all "humanistic" art and to see little merit in any other.

IF BERENSON'S point of view is essentially subjective, that of the philosopher Etienne Gilson in *Painting and Reality* is just the opposite. The art of painting is studied with a view to penetrating to its essential characteristics, and the study is pursued with the tools of philosophical investigation plus the statements of painters themselves about painting. This last might make one fear stepping from the frying pan into the fire, as it does seem that the most valuable things painters have to say is in their painting and not in their words. But M. Gilson's quotations from Delacroix's *Journals,* the writings of Eric Gill, Gauguin, Constable, etc., are all extraordinarily interesting and pertinent.

The first point established by this investigation is that the plastic arts (as distinct from poetry and music) have an objective existence; the final conclusion is that the painter is not giving us "the image of a reality . . . but add(ing) a reality to reality." The painter is seen in fact as "one of the creative forces of nature" and it is pointed out that a work of art "needs to be understood and judged from the point of view of its own structure." In making the distinction between "pictures" and "painting" (and pointing out that what makes a work of art or a "painting" are just those elements that are not a "picture" or an "image") Gilson is led to embrace contemporary art as the restorer of "painting to its primitive [oh dear!] and true function, which is to continue through man the creativity of nature." M. Gilson of course takes due note of the fact that while the painter may be creating new forms he is not creating them out of nothing, and quotes Eric Gill to that effect: "the artist does not create *ex nihilo* but he does create *de novo.*"

Despite the fact that the scholar-critic and the philosopher differ in everything from style and point of view to conclusions of the most transcendental nature, it is perhaps not a trifling demonstration of the indomitable reality of art that they happen to concur in not a few points of observation. In fact, they express the same feelings about such things as reproductions, exhibitions, attributions *("Chi guarda cartello non mangia vitello,"* quotes Berenson), restorations, etc. Most important for the art lover who aspires to become a connoisseur (or simply to love better) they both provide a thousand new insights into the world of art. Moreover, they both (if you read between the lines of Berenson) show one essential similarity: they value the integrity or coherence of a work of art over all its other attributes.

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Catholic Press Month

As a wholly independent lay weekly which is primarily concerned with the temporal order—the specific province of the layman—The Commonweal clearly cannot claim to speak for the Church. Its editors have not been commissioned by the Church; they certainly cannot speak with the spiritual authority of the Church, nor indeed even with the Church's temporal experience. As editors we have often gone out of our way to make this clear in the pages of the magazine. . . .

The fact, however, that we *are* Catholics and tend to see the temporal order as being directly related to the spiritual surely distinguishes this magazine from similar journals of opinion. The fact that most readers of The Commonweal are Catholics who take a lively interest in the Church and seriously try to conform their thinking on temporal questions to their spiritual commitments also means something. Finally, most of the magazine's contributors are Catholics—some of them quite eminent Catholics and personally invested with authority which The Commonweal as such does not have. They write in these pages because they know that here they can quite consciously speak as Catholics. This is also not without meaning. . . .

As long as The Commonweal continues to concern itself mainly with the thorny social and political problems of the day—dealing in concrete realities and not only in abstract principles—a large number of Catholics will continue to take issue with the magazine. This is as it should be. Anyone publishing a journal of opinion, Catholic or not, must count on the fact that the world is full of people with opinions of their own.

—from a leaflet, What is The Commonweal?

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